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ABSTRACT

While it is not clear how much responsibility vocational education bears for the inequities in employment and earning patterns in Georgia, it is clear that men and women do not make vocational choices unencumbered by sex influences. Federal legislation provides mandates to reduce sex stereotyping and discrimination in vocational education. Sex stereotyping leads teachers to assume that males and females possess different sets of abilities, interests, values, and roles. These stereotyped expectations limit opportunities for individual development and lead females to develop unrealistic work attitudes and career plans. Stereotyping also results in increased work pressures for males. Although more women are in the labor force, wage and job segregation still exist. Vocational education programs mirror occupational choices in the labor force. Information from the 1980 Status Report of Males and Females in Vocational Education in Georgia indicates a slow growth toward integration of programs by sex. Wage disparities still exist. The predominance of vocational instructors in teaching areas traditional for their sex and the overwhelming predominance of men at higher administrative levels leads one to conclude that the state and local administration of vocational education in Gerogia is almost entirely a male dominated area. (MN)

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Conference on

Beyond the Mandates: Economy and Equity

The Status of Equity in Vocational Education

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Introduction

The latest local, state and National statistics continue to show tremendous disparity between the incomes of women and men. Data collected by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, which compare the median earnings of full time, men and women yearly workers, show that women's median earnings as a percent of men's were 63.9 percent in 1955, and have dropped steadily, with very little fluctuations, to 59.4 percent in 1978. While there has been some documentation of unequal pay between men and women for equal work, the primary reason for this discrepancy rests in the types of jobs which women are trained for and pursue.

The preparation for employment which the education system is providing often excludes or limits persons which can and should benefit from such training. Women are heavily concentrated in a narrow range of careers which offer low incomes. At the same time, women continue to make up a very small proportion of workers in the higher salary technical and trade and industry careers--Plumbing, auto mechanics, carpentry and welding were all more than 99 percent male in 1978. Most jobs are still strongly dominated by one sex and, in some cases, one race.

Racial and ethnic minorities have been served in small numbers and often in a limited range of programs. Handicapped individuals have virtually been nonexistant in traditional post secondary vocational programs. Social and economic conditions have caused recent interest to be focused on the expansion of vocational-technical training programs for these underrepresented groups.

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The primary purposes of vocational education are to:

- Provide individuals with the skills they need to attain economic freedom
- Enhance the productivity of local, state, and national economies.

Vocational education is closely associated with occupational choices and opportunities. Such choices are among the most critical that a person will ever make: they help to determine incomes, status, and a way of life. While it is not clear how much responsibility vocational education alone bears for the inequities which currently exist in the employment and earning patterns in Georgia, it is clear that men and women do not make vocational choices unencumbered by sex, race or ethnic influences. Furthermore, throughout the United States, women emerge from vocational education programs with the assurance of earning less income and working in lower prestige jobs.

Although the civil rights laws in 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 made sex and race discrimination illegal, inequities have remained. Thus, while these anti-discrimination measures were necessary, they were not sufficient to eliminate institutionalized stereotyping and discrimination. Educators, advocates, and congressional members recognized that these measures needed to be supplemented with actions which would carry out the intent of the law. In enacting the Education Amendments of 1976 (public Law 94-482), Congress provided for such steps in vocational education. The declaration of purpose authorizes federal grants to states to assist them to "develop and carry out such programs of vocational education within each state

so as to overcome sex discrimination and sex stereotyping in vocational education programs (including programs of homemaking), and thereby furnish equal educational opportunities in vocational education to persons of both sexes."

There are active mandates throughout the legislation to address inequities through staff development, curriculum development, research and demonstration projects, and guidance and counseling. Section 104 (b) (1) of the Act requires states to assign full-time personnel specific activities aimed at reducing sex stereotyping and to assure that the needs and interests of women are addressed in projects assisted under the Act. Thus, this legislation requires a concerted effort to identify and eliminate sex inequities in vocational education.

Origins and Consequences of Sex Discrimination and Sex Role Stereotyping

Sex role stereotyping and sex discrimination take many forms. In the home, the selection of toys, differential rules, and separate household chores are obvious ways of programming children to believe that males and females have separate and unequal status in the world. In the classroom, the methods are more subtle. Girls form a quiet background to the active role of boys. Teachers interact more frequently with boys, both in positive and negative ways. The end result is far more verbal attention for boys. In other areas, girls are invisible too--by their absence on bulletin boards, by sex-biased language (salesman, foreman, or the constant reliance on the male pronoun "he" to refer to both males and females), and by the emphasis on compensatory programs to alleviate problems which affect

boys and ignore those which hamper girls (many reading and emotional learning problems programs primarily to meet the special needs of boys while few are in spatial relations or math for girls).

Additionally, educators often assume that males and females share different sets of abilities, interests, values and roles. These stereotyped expectations ignore individual differences in male and female students and, thus, limit opportunities for the development of these differences.

In recent years, there has been an increasing concern over this dual role system for women and men because such a system limits one's career and life to very narrow choices solely based on one's gender. In basic terms, men are "breadwinners" and women "belong in the home". There are many arguments for such stereotypic conclusions, mainly based on biological differences. And, although these differences do exist, their importance has been exaggerated. Research has determined that, in the important areas of capabilities and interests, there are greater differences within each sex than between sexes. What this means is that vast numbers of people are being limited by their physical characteristics rather than their abilities.

As a result of the socialization process, girls change their views toward work as they grow. While very young, girls envision many careers, but rapidly learn that few are appropriate for them. Vocational goals, which are so important to young girls, shift to very important marriage goals in high school. For girls who do have vocational goals, their plans are in the traditional stereotypic areas

such as teaching, secretarial or clerical work, social services, and nursing.

Girls are often less realistic in their career plans, with inconsistencies showing in the educational plans required for certain careers. It has been suggested that one possible reason for girls to be less realistic in career planning than boys might be that work has a lower priority for girls. An unrealistically small number of female teenagers believe they will work outside their home even though current statistics estimate that 90 percent of these young women will do so. Not only will they work, but they will work many years. In 1970, the typical 18 year old was likely to work 33.9 years, as well as marry and have two children.

There is considerable evidence to refute the stereotypic notion that a woman's place is at home. Currently, approximately 40 million women are in the labor force, comprising more than 40 percent of all workers. Most of these women work because of economic need, either as sole heads of households (50 percent) or to supplement the income of husbands who earn less than $10,000 (27 percent).

And yet, for every dollar a man earned in 1977, the typical woman earned 59 cents. Women consistently have earned less than men, even within the same occupations, and the difference is increasing. The primary reason for these differences is the fact that women are concentrated in but a few areas considered traditionally to be "feminine" jobs, as teaching or nurturing or assisting males, which can be seen as extensions of the work at home. Thus, although more women

are working now, they are not being allowed or are not allowing themselves to select jobs with greater variety or which command greater salaries.

The problem of sex discrimination and sex role stereotyping for men is not as well researched nor as evident. Although the dual role system does not penalize men economically, there are other negative consequences. Men are generally expected to be the support of the family, the "breadwinners". This limitation often causes men to seek professions which offer top salaries rather than life enrichment rewards.

Boys are viewed as more realistic in their career planning than girls because they have had many more opportunities in school to explore choices. Additionally, many role models are available through such media as books and T.V. In almost all cases, the stereotypical man is able to provide a comfortable lifestyle for his family and be respected in the community. Also, the man is seen as an achiever--an astronaut, a company president, a top salesman, etc.--a role which brings status. Studies have shown that boys' fantasies are similar to their career aspirations, focusing on work and personal satisfaction derived from contributing to a work group. However, studies have found that boys' worries and concerns also center around work and achievement.

Just as there is evidence to refute the stereotypic notion that a woman's place is at home, not all men achieve fame, fortune, and status. The problem is that men often come to define masculinity in terms of success at work. The fear of failure, and possible loss of status and esteem, places a great strain on men to achieve the fantasy which they chose for their lives but sometimes cannot achieve in the reality of the world of work. Thus, men have higher suicide rates, more heart attacks, and more overall serious health problems than women.

When considering all of the problems associated with the stereotypes of males and females which are perpetuated in our society, it seems clear that efforts must be made to change the nature of training for careers and the socialization that leads to career choices. As role expectations could be expanded, increasing numbers of both sexes would realize the importance of living skills. Changes in the labor force and family today make it evident that new skills and greater options are important for individuals for either sex.

Males and Females in the Work Force and in Vocational Education

With the changing nature of our social and economic structure, more and more women are finding themselves in the world of work. All told, 41,802,000 women--the most ever--are now in the labor force. This figure amounts to more than half of all women, a figure up from 34 percent in 1950. Additionally, women are a growing share of all workers, up from 30 percent in 1950 to more than 40 percent in 1978.

Despite these gains in the numbers of women employed, the patterns of job segregation that confine women to traditionally female occupations have not changed. More than 70 percent of all women still are employed traditionally clerical (35 percent), service (21 percent), or light factory jobs (15 percent). By contrast, only 50 percent of men are employed in the three largest occupational groups employing men: skilled crafts (21 percent), professional and technical (14 percent), and managers (14 percent).

Within occupations, women are also segregated. In medicine, women are overrepresented in such areas as pediatrics and anesthesiology, but are underrepresented in surgery and surgical specialities. In law, few women are judges, leading partners in law firms, or in law-making

agencies. Only 10 percent of working women work in a professional capacity other than management or administration. In administrative or management positions, one out of seven men is so employed; for women, the ratio is one out of 20. In banking, women hold more than 80 percent of the clerical jobs and less than 20 percent of the managerial positions. The story is similar in the federal government, the largest employer of women. They hold 76 percent of the lowest paying federal jobs, but only 32 percent of those paying more than $42,000 per year.

Low wages for women hurt not only women but also children and men. Women work because of ecomomic need, with 12 percent having husbands earning between $7,000 and $10,000 per year and 15 percent having husbands earning less than $7,000 per year. Economists say that married women are working to keep families from falling behind in the race with inflation. In 1977, the median yearly income for families with a working wife was $22,128--or $3,061 more than families with only a male wage earner. Women, now in ever larger numbers, are divorced and raising families. The figure for such single parent families is 13 percent, up 100 percent since 1940. These women have 50 percent less income than males who head families. The problem is heightened when one considers that the median total payment for child support is $1300 per year.

In looking at the concentration of women in traditionally female occupations, one sees few changes. In the decade of the 1960s, women in trades increased from 274,000 to 495,000. In specific trades, some examples are as follows: carpenters--from 0.4 to 1.3 percent, electricians--0.7 to 1.8 percent, plumbers--0.3 to 1.1 percent, and auto mechanics--1.3 to 3.1 percent. When one looks at the rate of increase of women entering skilled trades, the figures seem impressive. But in terms of absolute numbers, the figures are small.

Vocational education programs mirror the occupational choices in the labor force. Although women make up 55 percent of the students enrolled in federally funded vocational education programs and two-thirds of all secondary vocational education enrollments, they are heavily concentrated in home economics and in office and health occupations. About 45 percent of all women receiving vocational education in 1972 were enrolled in consumer and homemaking courses (often leading to unpaid jobs as homemakers). Twenty-eight percent of all vocational education students were taking courses leading to office occupations, and 85 percent of these students were women. By contrast, women made up less than 12 percent of the total trade enrollments, and even they were heavily concentrated in such traditionally female occupations as cosmetology, commercial and graphic arts, and public service. In technical occupations, less than 10 percent of the total enrollment was female.

Women in traditionally male vocational education courses are on the increase, and there are numbers of reasons. One is the realization that better wages can be earned in such areas. Additionally, the government has started to require affirmative action for women on federally assisted construction projects. By 1981, the work force

on such construction jobs must be seven percent female. Many local programs are now using federal funds to train women for the skilled trades.

But what about males in nontraditional jobs? By limiting female and male roles, men as well as women are affected. Although not economically penalized by traditional roles, there are other problems. If sex-role stereotyping were eliminated, many more service and white-collar jobs would be open to men. Partially as a result of new burdens placed on men because of the shared childrearing practices required when both parents work, men are accepting more and more jobs traditionally performed by women at home. This has given rise to greater family participation and enjoyment in ways not previously anticipated. Additionally, males are beginning to enter jobs traditionally held by women in such areas as elementary teaching, nursing, and clerical areas. With shared responsibility for family income, men are finding more options open to them for selecting jobs they enjoy rather than those which only offer higher salaries. With lower levels of stress and pressure, through shared responsibility and/or wider choices in selecting jobs which they enjoy, the early death rate of males may begin to change in a positive manner.

The challenge is in freeing the roles and choices of both men and women. The growing realization among those who encourage and/or participate in nontraditional choices is that the man's place, like the woman's, is anywhere they want or need to be.

As a matter of perspective, the Project on Equal Education Rights of the NOW Legal Defense Education Fund has recently published a report (PEER Perspective, September 1979, Vol. 5, No.3) on female participation in three "traditionally male" areas of school life: interscholastic sports, administration, and vocational education. Georgia ranked thirty-third in terms of interscholastic sports and did not report data on school administrators by sex. In vocational education, Georgia ranked twentieth, with 10.15 percent of female students in traditionally male vocational courses. The top ranked state has 20.09 percent female participation in traditionally male vocational courses and the lowest ranked state has 1.77 percent participation. On the average, females now number one in 10 in traditionally male courses. Seven years ago, the number was one in 17. Georgia's overall ranking by average percent female particiaption was twelfth.

Additional information from the 1980 Status Report of Males and Females in Vocational Education in Georgia is as follows:

1. In the past year nearly half of all vocational programs in Georgia could be classified as being traditionally male or female in composition. However, the number of such courses has been considerably reduced during the past three years.
2. As the secondary level, in 1978-79, 85 percent of the female students were enrolled in programs leading to Health Care, Homemaking, and Office Occupations, while two-thirds of the male students were enrolled in Agriculture, Industrial Arts, and Trade and Industrial courses.

3. At the post secondary level, in 1979-80, more than two-thirds of female students were enrolled in programs leading to Health Care and Office Occupations, while four-fifths of the male students were enrolled in Technical and Trade and Industrial courses.
4. The number of students entering courses at all levels which are nontraditional for their sex is very low, and continues to decrease as one looks at secondary, post secondary, and junior college levels.
5. There has been growth toward integration of programs by sex, although the rate of growth has been slow and many individual courses remain highly segregated by sex.
6. Male and female students at the post secondary and junior college levels have comparable rates of placement in field.
7. Male post secondary vocational graduates earn $177 more per month than female vocational graduates.
8. At the secondary, post secondary, and junior college levels, vocational instructors remain primarily within traditional teaching areas for their sex.
9. At the local vocational level in both secondary and post secondary institutions, the administration of programs is more than 90 percent male.
10. The state vocational education staff is 77 percent male. At the higher administrative levels (above merit system level 35), this figure jumps to 95 percent male. The secretarial staff is almost 100 percent female.

11. Taken together the administration of vocational education in the state of Georgia, at the local and at the state level, is almost entirely a male dominated area.

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